

# STATE OF COLORADO

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Jane E. Norton  
Lieutenant Governor

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## **NORTON ANNOUNCES RECOMMENDATIONS OF FITZSIMONS STATE VETERANS NURSING HOME ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE**

(DENVER) – Lieutenant Governor Jane Norton announced today that the Fitzsimons State Veterans Nursing Home Accountability Committee has submitted its recommendations to Governor Bill Owens. Chief among the recommendations is that the public-private partnership model that has served the veterans at Fitzsimons so well should be implemented on a statewide level to benefit residents at all state veterans nursing homes.

Until this occurs, the committee recommends that the contract be extended with the current management company at Fitzsimons to assure on-going progress at the facility.

"The Accountability Committee's primary concern was to ensure continued improvements to patient safety and the facility's financial viability," said Norton. "We've seen dramatic improvement of patient safety and financial viability measures at Fitzsimons, thanks to the hard work of Pinon Management and the Colorado Department of Human Services. The committee unanimously endorses continuing this effective public-private partnership model. Without coordinated, long-term care expertise and proven systems in place, conditions could erode."

Concerned by substandard patient care, Governor Owens appointed the committee in October 2004 through an Executive Order.

"I am particularly pleased by the committee's unanimous decision to expand the state's public-private partnership in managing our veterans nursing facilities," said Governor Owens. "The committee completed an extensive and thorough review in finalizing its recommendations. I thank them for their efforts."

After reviewing financial and patient safety information, conducting public meetings, and reviewing an extensive gap analysis, the committee compiled its recommendations. Additional recommendations submitted to the Governor focus on helping assure overall operational success of the state's veterans nursing homes through independent oversight, streamlining personnel processes, and expediting Medicaid eligibility determination.

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The full committee report can be viewed on Lieutenant Governor Norton's website at:  
<http://www.colorado.gov/ltgovernor/>

"Each member of the committee was dedicated to reviewing, evaluating, and recommending solutions to improve conditions at Fitzsimons and other state veterans nursing homes to help strengthen services and provide support for Colorado veterans," Norton said. "We have submitted a comprehensive, substantive report to the Governor, and are confident that with the suggested systems in place, Colorado state veterans nursing homes will see steady improvement in long-term and quality care services for our veterans and their families."

Members of the committee appointed by Governor Owens are:

- Randall Hoffman of Lakewood is secretary of the State Board of Veterans Affairs and president of the 101st Airborne Association.
- Rep. Cheri Jahn of Wheat Ridge (D) is a member of the Colorado House of Representatives.
- Marvin Meyers of Denver is a member of the Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs.
- David Rivera of Denver is the Commissioner of Insurance with the Department of Regulatory Agencies, and is a former senior policy advisor to Gov. Bill Owens.
- Youlon Savage of Denver is chairman of the State Board of Human Services.
- Henry Sobanet of Denver is director of the Office of State Planning and Budgeting.
- Marva Livingston Hammons of Denver is Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Human Services.

"The ultimate impact of the committee's recommendations will be positive and far reaching. Quality service, trained staff and the development of sound management and responsible administrative practices were among our primary concerns," according to Marvin Meyers, Legislative Chairman and Past President of the United Veterans Committee of Colorado. "We salute the Governor for creating the Accountability Committee, and Lieutenant Governor Norton for providing the vision and leadership necessary to stabilize and improve services for our veterans residing at Fitzsimons and other veterans homes in Colorado."

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